



Watershed-Based NPDES Permitting Case Studies

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What is Watershed-Based NPDES Permitting?

Watershed-based NPDES permitting is a process that emphasizes addressing all stressors within a hydrologically-defined drainage basin or other geographic area, rather than addressing individual pollutant sources on a discharge-by-discharge basis. Watershed-based permitting can encompass a variety of activities ranging from synchronizing permits within a basin to developing water-quality based effluent limits using a multiple discharger modeling analysis. The type of permitting activity will vary from watershed-to-watershed, depending on the unique circumstances in the watershed and the sources impacting watershed conditions. The ultimate goal of watershed-based NPDES permitting, however, is to develop and issue NPDES permits that consider the entire watershed, not just an individual point source discharger.

What Does This Document Contain?

To promote this innovative permitting approach, EPA has generated a series of case study fact sheets highlighting existing watershed-based NPDES permitting efforts. These case studies generally fall into two categories: 1) Final Permit and 2) Permitting Approach. Case studies in the Final Permit category provide an overview of completed NPDES permits that have been developed and issued on a watershed basis. Case studies in the Permitting Approach category focus on projects related to one or more aspects of the watershed-based NPDES permitting process (i.e., an actual permit has not yet resulted from this process). This document contains fact sheets for the following case studies:

1. General Permit for Nitrogen Dischargers: Final Permit
2. The Selenium Stakeholder Group: Permitting Approach
3. Michigan General NPDES Storm Water Permit: Final Permit
4. Clean Water Services (Hillsboro, OR): Permitting Approach
5. Rahr Malting Company: Final Permit
6. Northern Kentucky Sanitation District No. 1: Permitting Approach
7. Discharges of Storm Water Runoff Associated with Industrial Activities and Maintenance Dredging at Marinas in the Lake Tahoe Hydrologic Unit (El Dorado and Placer Counties): Final Permit
8. Discharges of Storm Water Runoff Associated with Construction Activity Involving Land Disturbance in the Lake Tahoe Hydrologic Unit (El Dorado, Placer and Alpine Counties): Final Permit
9. Waste Discharge Requirements for the City of South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County, and Placer County Storm Water/Urban Runoff Discharge: Final Permit
10. Louisville and Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD): Permitting Approach

Implementation of watershed-based permitting is relatively limited at this time. These case studies represent permitting activities that exemplify aspects of the watershed-based permitting process and help to illustrate how this approach can be applied in watersheds. EPA does not intend to imply that these case studies are “model” permits or permitting approaches. EPA first made these case studies available in April 2003. This version reflects updates to the original case studies made in December 2003. As more information is made available, EPA will update these fact sheets to reflect the current progress and results in these watershed-based permitting efforts. As states and EPA regions identify other examples, EPA will produce new case studies to add to the fact sheet series. The case study series, as well as other information on watershed-based NPDES permitting, is available on EPA’s Web site at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/wqbasedpermitting/wspermitting.cfm>.